

# First Lady Mary Pat Christie Launches Third Annual Heart Of A Hero Scholarship for Military Service Members

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**Trenton, NJ** – Continuing the Christie Administration’s strong commitment to military members and veterans, First Lady Mary Pat Christie today announced *New Jersey Heroes* third annual *Heart of a Hero* Scholarship. The program helps military service members pursue a post-secondary education or vocational training by providing another resource to make their higher education and career goals a reality. This year, *New Jersey Heroes* is funding ten \$5,000 scholarships to be awarded in time for the 2014-15 school year.

“*New Jersey Heroes* is once again honored to support our military service members and veterans by helping to advance their educational goals through the *Heart of a Hero* Scholarship Program,” said First Lady Mary Pat Christie. “Over the past two years, we’ve been able to provide assistance that has enabled our service men and women to pursue careers in areas such as the law enforcement, fine arts, environmental science, medicine and marketing. We’re pleased to have this opportunity to repay our military heroes in this small way for their service and sacrifice on behalf of our country.”

For 2013 *Heart of a Hero* recipient Marine Corps Captain Christopher Southard of Margate, “This scholarship is a huge help as I transition from Active Duty into the Reserves and a career in law enforcement. The scholarship helped me to complete my MS Degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Cincinnati in April. Also I have received a conditional offer of employment as a county investigator with the Atlantic County Prosecutors Office and I look forward to beginning work with them this July.”

Another 2013 recipient, U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant Robert Abato of McGuire AFB, will be finishing a Master of Science, Environmental Policy and Management degree at American Military University in February 2015. He’ll then begin a graduate certificate in Strategic Leadership. In January 2014, Technical Sergeant Abato was awarded the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal for his outstanding community involvement. “This scholarship has set

me up for my future transition from the military to the civilian sector. I want to thank the New Jersey Heroes organization for all its help and support,” Technical Sergeant Abato said.

According to U.S. Army Specialist James Raczowski, a 2013 recipient from Brigantine, “The scholarship has helped tremendously by relieving some of the debt burden incurred while attending graduate school. It has given me peace of mind and an even greater focus to complete my goals and become the best possible artist, veteran, and citizen alike.” While studying at The New York Academy of Art, Specialist Raczowski has volunteered his time to help bring the Veterans Artist Program to the Academy for the first time. In addition, The New York Academy of Art recently awarded Specialist Raczowski a month long summer arts residency in Moscow.

Applicants for the *Heart of a Hero* Scholarship must meet several program criteria: 1) be a United States citizen and New Jersey resident; 2) be a high school graduate or have a high school equivalency diploma (GED); 3) served in the military and submit documentation of military service; if discharged from the military, must show proof of honorable discharge; 4) enroll as a student at an accredited college/university or a vocational training school in pursuit of a degree for the 2014-15 school year; 5) demonstrate a commitment to volunteerism and community contribution, in the spirit of New Jersey Heroes.

Service members interested in applying for the *Heart of a Hero* Scholarship must fully complete the application form either online at <http://newjerseyheroes.org/index/2014-heart/> by **no later than 5:00 p.m. Friday, August 1, 2014** or submit an application via US Mail postmarked no later than **August 1, 2014** and mailed to NJ Heroes, P.O. Box 95, Mendham, NJ 07945-0095. **Application deadline is Friday, August 1, 2014.**

*Heart of a Hero* Scholarship recipients will be notified in late August.

“New Jersey Heroes recognizes and celebrates the inspiring work being done by individuals and non-profit organizations across the Garden State,” noted Mrs. Christie. “In that spirit, the recipients of the *Heart of a Hero* Scholarship will continue to embody these same ideals through volunteerism and community service.”

New Jersey Heroes is an initiative of First Lady Mary Pat Christie that showcases the positive and unique ways people and organizations are impacting New Jersey and their communities. To nominate a hero, go to <http://newjerseyheroes.org> and follow the application instructions to submit the person you believe is a true New Jersey Hero.

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